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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/781;755

02/12/2001

David W. Cox JR.

40091-10018

8425

7590

04/17/2003

Patent and Trademark Docket Clerk
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EXAMINER

ST CYR, DANIEL

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2876

DATE MAILED: 04/17/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/781,755

Applicant(s)

COX, DAVID W.

Examiner

Daniel St.Cyr

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 February 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

1. Receipt is acknowledged of the amendment filed 2/11/03 in which independent claims 1 and 14 were amended and claims 16-20 were added.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Beller et al, US Patent No. 5,602,377, in view of Talvalkar et al, US patent No. 5,602,377.

Beller et al disclose a bar code dataform scanning and labeling apparatus and method comprising: a label 12 associated with a retail item 14, said label lacking a post purchase machine-readable indicia, a point of sale encoding device 10 providing a machine-readable post-purchase indicia 16 associated with the label during the purchased by a customer; and a detecting is inherently included to detect the post-purchase indicia when the item is returned, the post purchase indicia is machine-readable only, the encoding device provides said machine-readable indicia optically, the label is selected from paper, plastic etc., the label is comprised of a plurality of layers (data layer, adhesive layer etc.), a refund is conditioned upon detecting the post-purchased indicia, the post purchase indicia identifies the store where said retail item was sole and the payment method. (see figures 1, 4, 5; col. 6, line 26+).

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Beller et al disclose that the bar code may be printed in invisible ink, but fail to disclose or fairly suggest that the invisible code is printed on the label for indicating the post-purchase indicia.

Talvalkar et al disclose a thermal transfer printing ribbon for printing security bar code symbols comprising: a thermal printing ribbon for printing security bar code symbols 10, wherein the bar code is invisible to human eye to tighten and to verify receipts when items when returned to a store, wherein the thermal transfer printing ribbon has been overprinted or overcoated in specific predetermined locations with a coating which has magnetic recognition characteristics. The difference in printed bar code symbols is invisible to the human eye and conventional bar-code scanning equipment, but can be readily detected using a device capable of recognizing a magnetic signal (see figure 1; col. 1, lines 48-57 and col. 2, line 31 +).

In view of Talvalkar et al's teachings, it would have been obvious for a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to employ the well known security printing process in conjunction with the system of Beller et al as an alternate means for identifying and verifying returned merchandises. Such modification would make the system more versatile and more practical wherein purchase items could either receive an additional modified label or modify the label attached thereon, for effective identification if the items are returned. Further, using invisible marking would provide additional security levels to prevent fraud and would facilitate re-circulation of returned items. Regarding to erasing the invisible code, once the returned items are verified to be in condition for re-circulation, erasing the code would have been obvious so the item

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could be properly processed when the items are re-purchased. Therefore, it would have been an obvious extension as taught by Beller et al.

Conclusion

4. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

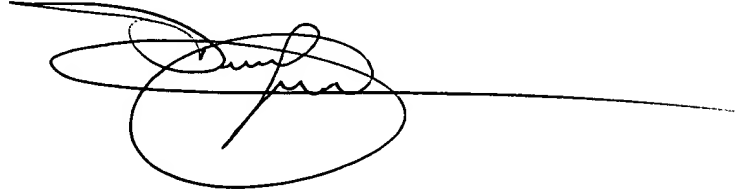
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Daniel St.Cyr whose telephone number is 703-305-2656. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael G Lee can be reached on 703-305-3503. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-308-7721 for regular communications and 703-308-7724 for After Final communications.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0956.

Daniel St.Cyr
Examiner
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel St.Cyr', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

DS
April 14, 2003